

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 1 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative
of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that on Monday, 15 February 2016, the Security Council plans to hold an open debate at the ministerial level on the theme "Respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as a key element for the maintenance of international peace and security". The related concept note is annexed.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rafael Ramírez
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 1 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the ministerial open debate of the Security Council on the theme "Respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as a key element for the maintenance of international peace and security"

The history of humanity has been marked by conflicts between societies and nations for the control of areas of influence, expressed through conquest and imperialist wars; some of them having even reached a global character, as in the cases of the First and Second World Wars. The destruction caused by such conflagrations, particularly those that occurred during the first half of the twentieth century, led nations and leaders of the world to work towards the establishment of multilateral formulas that would make it possible to overcome the unsettled approach that had prevailed until then in international relations. This also sought to promote a system that would ensure the elimination of those asymmetries and views proper to hegemonic policies promoted by some centres of power.

After the failed attempt of the League of Nations during the first quarter of the last century to form an international system based on peace, the Organization of the United Nations emerged in 1945, from the ashes of the Second World War, with the firm purpose — as expressed in the Preamble to the Charter — of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Thus, the Charter of the United Nations would constitute the first international legal agreement of a multilateral nature that expressly and definitely forbade war as an instrument of foreign policy.

The Organization, throughout its history, has registered significant achievements in the field of peace, security and international cooperation; most notable are its contributions to the cause of human rights, decolonization, and economic and social development. While highlighting its positive performance, we acknowledge, however, that its record has not been exempt of flaws and that, at many times, the Organization has not been in line with the expectations that the peoples of the world have of it. Nevertheless, the United Nations remains the best option we have to face, from a perspective of peace and cooperation, the large and complex challenges to be faced by humanity.

One of the key elements for ensuring the said objectives is complying with strict adherence to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which are the pillars on which international law is based. In this respect, sovereignty, the equality of States, non-interference, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and refraining from the use or threat of use of force against territorial integrity or political independence are all cardinal principles of international relations and peaceful coexistence among nations, which must therefore be fully respected by Member States.

Before the views promoted by those interested in diminishing the political and legal value of these principles, in favour of a uniform and globalized approach distant from an inclusive multilateralism, the vast majority of nations have refuted this argument and have reaffirmed the importance of the international community acting in adherence to the postulates that the Charter wisely established seven decades ago.

Despite the commitment of the majority with the respect to Article 2 (1), in recent years there have been incidents in which the sovereignty of some countries has been violated, negatively impacting international peace and security. This has created conditions conducive to the emergence, growth, strengthening and expansion of terrorist groups, which take advantage of the chaos resulting from the institutional dismantling and collapse caused by such actions in order to impose their criminal and totalitarian agenda, as well as their extremist ideology, to the detriment of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of concerned States.

The growing interference in the internal affairs of States by Governments, in violation of the principle of non-interference, must also be noted. The attempts to ignore the right of countries and their peoples to decide their future, particularly the definition of their political, economic and social system, constitute an obstacle to peaceful coexistence among nations and, thereby, to peace and security.

With regard to conflicts of various origins and nature in different regions of the world, an intention to promote options contrary to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes is observed in some sectors. The Charter of the United Nations establishes the obligation of States to settle their differences by peaceful means; hence, States Members of the Organization must work on that basis. At the same time, the Security Council shall favour the means established in Article 33 of this legal instrument, and encourage regional and subregional organizations to take on an active role in the settlement of these conflicts. Thus, the trend of the Security Council to resort to the application of coercive measures in conflict situations that do not pose a threat to international peace and security would be averted.

In the light of the above-mentioned considerations, with this debate on the respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela seeks to reaffirm the full validity of the said values, to draw attention to the risks and threats that undermine their implementation, and to engage Member States in effective compliance with those provisions, with a view to strengthening international peace and security.

The threats to international peace and security as a result of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, prolonged conflicts, and outstanding colonial cases, as well as those situations of violence and destabilization that have recently emerged in the Middle East and North Africa, require the strong will and readiness of Member States to conduct their international relations on a basis of equality, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, without interference in internal affairs, and commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes.

For this purpose, it is necessary that, within the framework of the Security Council, the application of double standards be avoided in addressing issues affecting international peace and security. Likewise, the negative trend of imposing coercive measures in situations that do not constitute a threat shall also be reverted, while promoting negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and the resort to regional agencies or arrangements, among others, in accordance with Chapters Vi and VIII.

Moreover, and in order to safeguard and give full effect to the purposes and principles of the Charter, Member States must reject and refrain from applying unilateral coercive measures and national legislation with extraterritorial effects, as well as refrain from bringing to the Security Council issues that are of the domestic competence of concerned countries, in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 (7).

Finally, it is sought that with the holding of this open debate a frank exchange of opinions and a reflection on an issue that transcends a formality and which is linked to issues of global reality concerning this Organization and with a direct impact on international peace and security is produced. Also, this exercise intends to engage Member States in the defence of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as key elements for the peaceful settlement of disputes and as the only way for ensuring international peace and security.

Briefer

The Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Expected results

A summary by the presidency is expected as a product of this open debate, taking into account the statements delivered by delegations participating in the meeting, which would subsequently be circulated as a document of both the Security Council and the General Assembly.
